

FINAL
Michigan Freedom Trail Commission Meeting Minutes
10:00 AM, March 16, 2018
Board Room, Michigan History Center, Lansing, Michigan

Commissioners present: Kerry Baldwin, Rochelle Danquah, Roy Finkenbine, Edwina Murphy, Michael Nassaney, Robin Peebles, David Teeter

Commissioners on conference call: Ronald Brown (joined at the beginning of the meeting, call was lost, and unable to rejoin), Amanda Campbell

Excused: Juanita Moore, Rev. Kevin Turman

Staff: Mary Patrick, Tobi Voigt

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Finkenbine called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.
2. **Agenda:** Nassaney moved to approve as presented; Campbell seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.
3. **Introductions:** Kerry Baldwin of Grand Rapids was welcomed to her first meeting. She has experience serving on preservation boards and replaces Jim Turner for a term that expires February 1, 2021. The remaining members and staff introduced themselves.
4. **Public Comments:** None
5. **Approval of Minutes:** Teeter moved to approve the December 8, 2017, meeting minutes as submitted; Danquah seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.
6. **Action Items:**
 - a. **Regional Collaboration:**
 - i. Finkenbine provided an overview of the regional collaboration subcommittee conference call held on February 6, 2018 (see handout). He asked the commission to consider two proposed dates, October 27, 2018, and November 3, 2018, for the first event. The FTC determined that October 27 would work best.
 - ii. Finkenbine asked for input on who should be invited (see handout for beginning list). Nassaney added Cass County UGRR Society, and groups in Niles and Berrien County. Danquah will work with Port Huron and Macomb County groups. Murphy added Mecosta County, and Teeter added the Detroit Historical Society.
 - iii. The one-day event will be a gathering for networking and learning what others across the state are doing. It will be offered at little cost and not require overnight stays. The group discussed that this is a first step, a convening of organizations that are involved in UGRR. The group decided that resource-sharing and presentations are best suited for the program's second year. The committee agreed that there should be a \$10 blanket fee. The group will consider waiving the fee on a case-by-case basis.
 - iv. Voigt will manage the mailing list and logistics for the event by first sending out a "Save the Date" eblast in early April. The commissioners will send all their email

contact information to Voigt (copying Finkenbine) by March 30. Voigt suggested that there also be a postcard or flyer to share at other related events.

- v. Finkenbine suggested a 9am – 3pm event, with an initial gathering, potentially with Skype participation from other states, breakouts for discussion and planning, and then an end gathering for sharing ideas. Commissioners also discussed presentations by communities in Michigan that are doing UGGR work well, followed by a lunchtime poster session. Nassaney said that a moderator could help with the discussion and suggested John Beck. From this initial gathering, the FTC hopes to identify people who are willing to be leaders in Michigan going forward.
- b. **Report of the Nominating Committee:** Teeter provided the report from the nominating committee (Teeter, Peebles, Turman). It recommended Roy Finkenbine as chair and Rochelle Danquah as vice chair. Teeter moved to approve the nominations on behalf of the committee. Nassaney seconded. After discussion, Teeter (with concurrence from Nassaney) amended the motion to remove Danquah and replace with Nassaney as vice chair. The motion carried.
- c. **Network to Freedom nominations:** The commission has no active or pending nominations. The commission is aware of the future nomination of Second Baptist Church of Detroit. There is potentially an active application in process from Cass County. Nassaney will investigate and get an update.
- d. **Annual Report:** Patrick presented the draft annual report to the governor and legislature. Danquah moved to approve the report with minor changes. Peebles seconded. The motion carried.

7. Reports

- a. **Staff:** Voigt provided an update on the permanent exhibits redevelopment process, with a focus on the new 1815-1865 section. She shared the main exhibit themes. Finkenbine asked if the commission can be involved in reviewing and contributing to UGRR content.
- b. **Chairperson:** Finkenbine provided a written report. He also discussed a UDM partnership with First Congregational Church to have students do research. Finkenbine also honored Mary Patrick, who will be retiring from the Michigan History Center on April 20. He presented and read a proclamation from the commission and gave her a gift from the FTC.
- c. **Vice Chairperson:** Danquah provided a written report. She was invited to support the nomination of Elizabeth Dennison Forth to the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame and Museum. She will be presenting at Wayne State University's Borderlands conference and at the National Genealogy Society conference in Grand Rapids. She is working with Jamon Jordan on the nomination for his UGRR tour.
- d. **Commissioner Reports:** None
- e. **Standing Committee Updates:** No reports.

8. New Business: None

9. News and Announcements: None.

10. **Adjourn Meeting:** Teeter moved to adjourn the meeting; Danquah seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:35 PM.